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GRANDFATHERED ESL TEACHERS DEVELOPMENT: ASSESSMENT OF CHANGE AND LESSONS LEARNED

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NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

The need for a professional development program in bilingual education at the graduate level was based on the needs of language minority students and the schools for well-qualified bilingual educators and ESL teachers. Language minority groups in northeastern Massachusetts schools are largely composed of Hispanic and Southeast Asian students.

GROWTH OF LANGUAGE MINORITY POPULATION

All of the schools participating in this collaboration, especially the largest cities in northeastern Massachusetts, Lowell and Lawrence, have experienced rapid demographic changes since the late 1970s. The schools in Lawrence have a minority population of almost 7,500, representing 72% of the total enrollment; 96% of those students name Spanish as their primary language, and about half are considered limited English proficient (LEP). Lowell has large numbers of both Southeast Asian and Hispanic students. The Southeast Asian school population increased from 4.1% of the total enrollment in 1982 to 23.5% (n= 3,169) in 1989. Hispanic students comprise about 15% of the Lowell school enrollment. LEP students include about two-thirds of the Southeast Asian students and 25% of the Hispanics. All other school districts in the collaborative have minority populations that are predominantly Hispanic.

SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The dramatic deficiency of certified Bilingual and ESL teachers is illustrated by the Massachusetts Department of Education data in Table 1. For example, out of 621 Hispanic bilingual teachers, 163 (26%) were not certified.

Table 1. Numbers of bilingual and ESL teachers

Type of Teacher	Total	Certified	Under Waiver	Grandfathered
Bilingual	57	0	57	
Cambodian /Khmer				
Hispanic /Spanish	621	458	458	
ESL	406	122	122	239

Because considerable numbers of LEP students are placed in or transferred into the standard curriculum and

because monolingual teachers from the standard curriculum are assigned to work with language minority students, the number of grandfathered ESL teachers has increased dramatically in Massachusetts (n=239, 59% of 406) since initiation of the policy. Some of the teachers, particularly those working under waivers, are under repeated yearly threats of termination, a situation exacerbated by budget shortfalls.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The philosophy of the grandfather program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, reflects both the competency-based tradition that focuses on skills necessary to teaching and the ethnographic tradition. Unlike other professional development programs, such as those that stress theory and action research (Minaya-Rowe, 1990), the structure of this program accommodates students from a number of communities in urgent need. The program considers their full-time employment status, part-time graduate student life and, for most, family responsibilities.

Both the philosophy and structure are discussed below. Inclusion of Superintendents' Forums, Principals' Seminars, parental participation, a clinical teaching model, and an emphasis on advising are important features of the program structure.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Skill-based development is evident in courses that focus on the competency standards required by the Massachusetts Department of Education for teacher certification. Competencies in curriculum development and adaptation, methods and materials, and assessment and evaluation are traditionally considered necessary for knowing what and how to teach.

The ethnographic tradition takes into account the cultural background of the students in order to bring the instructional strategy into harmony with students' ways of learning and, at the same time, to engender student respect for other ways of learning (Faltis and Merino, 1991). Because we confronted a situation in which the problem was to adapt the established traditional college professional development program to meet the needs of the new emerging, nontraditional LEP student population in the schools, the design of the program content focused on the need for the effective teacher to not only be aware of school culture but also to have the knowledge of the students' beliefs, values, and traditions. If one believes that the educational strategy and intervention for a linguistic minority student should focus on the child's diverse developmental needs, the ecological perspective should serve as the base of any teacher preparation program, since the child is a product of the social network. Davis (1987) says that: "the simple fact is that children are part of, and are influenced by several institutions: the families, neighborhoods, racial and ethnic communities" (p. 5). The infusion of the ethnographic perspective into the program allowed the faculty and staff to focus on educational strategies and teacher interventions in light of the students' diversity. In this regard, the goal of the graduate program was to prepare teachers to promote more and better student-teacher interaction and to foster a comfortable school climate for pupils, one in which the pupil's culture was valued and used to create interest and validation (Garcia, 1988). In this regard Faltis and Merino (1991) state "The beliefs teachers hold about individual and group achievement are especially noteworthy" (p. 11).

Needs were articulated in collaboration with the participating school districts. Six project objectives summarized the intent of the university-school collaborative to improve the effectiveness of twenty grandfathered ESL teachers. The objectives (See Table 2) are depicted with respect to implementation as shared responsibilities of the University and the collaborating schools.

Table 2. Project objectives: University and chool responsibilities

Objectives	Responsibilities

I. To improve the ESL program delivery by training 20 participants at the graduate level	
Inform and recuit	UM Lowell
Recommend candidates	and Schools
Select 20 candidates	Schools
Select faculty	UM Lowell
Orientation for program participants	UM Lowell
Develop participants' competencies	UM Lowell
Provide professional support in school setting	UM Lowell and Schools
	UM Lowell and Schools

Objectives	Responsibilities
II. To Provide Academic Support and Assistance to Program Participants	
Provide academic support to participants at the college	UM Lowell
To maximize the clinical model	UM Lowell and Schools

Objectives	Responsibilities
III.To Establish a Community Advisory Committee Addressing Unique Linguistic and Racial Characteristics	UM Lowell

Objectives	Responsibilities
IV. To Support Trainees and LEP Students; To Enhance Their Leadership Capacity, Provide Training to School Administrators	UM Lowell

Objectives	Responsibilities
V. To Establish a Bilingual/ESL Resource Center	UM Lowell

Objectives	Responsibilities

VI. To Evaluate the Program/ Make Adjustment	UM Lowell and Schools

ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

In addition to articulating needs, the collaborating schools were instrumental in supporting the program throughout the project. Beyond recruiting and recommending participants, school personnel were involved by providing professional support in the school setting through peer-teacher partnership and by encouraging clinical activities. Although the core of the program was to address the specific needs of teachers, the program also tended to the needs of school administrators, principals, and the community at large. A School Superintendents' Forum and a School Principals' Seminar were established with the purpose of discussing bilingual and ESL issues. The periodic meeting locations rotated among school districts. Superintendents, principals, and other mid-level administrators participated in these discussions, allowing them to interact among themselves and with nationally known visiting lecturers.

University project staff met periodically with a newly formed community advisory committee to help them develop awareness and strategies for bringing about change. The staff also made a special effort to meet with parents through outreach home visits and communication through the teachers and students. The parents were encouraged to discuss their concerns and to provide feedback to fine-tune the program.

The importance of the active involvement of school and community became doubly felt as the participating teachers moved through the second and third years of their program. The other two components of the program, the clinical model and leadership development, became more evident during the second year.

CLINICAL MODEL

To maximize professional development opportunities and to use current research about how to effect behavioral changes in the practice of experienced teachers, a clinical model was included in the design of the program. The presumption under this clinical model was that our veteran classroom teachers needed to expand their experiences in working with language minority pupils. To provide more formality to this approach, clinical activities were supervised on a regular basis by program staff with expertise in human relations and ESL. The clinical approach was increasingly emphasized beginning the second year. The practice-oriented model allowed the participants to apply in their ESL classes what was presented in the University courses and gave them the opportunity to consult with the clinical supervisor about instructional or school-change efforts.

An integral part of the clinical model was the school-based peer-partner teacher. Through this approach the University and school districts were able to create a context for stimulation for intellectual development, exchange of information, development of resource networks, and collegial feedback about practice.

Bruce (1988) showed that formal mentoring relationships within a school district provide a role model that demonstrates professionalism and enthusiasm in a teaching relationship. In our case, rather than a classical mentorship model, focusing on teacher induction activity, the peer-partner teachers, who were considered mentors, participated in the clinical model to foster professional growth. The relationships that developed between graduate students and peer partner teachers were characterized by collegiality through which support, information, and resources were exchanged. As a token of appreciation the peer partner teachers received a tuition voucher for a 3-credit class at the university.

PROCEDURAL STRUCTURE

The program was an intensive 36-hour graduate program designed to be completed by attending part-time in

three years during fall, spring, and summer semesters. To provide flexibility for working teachers, classes were scheduled to meet after the school day, on weekends, and during intersessions. During the first semester students took only one course to facilitate the transition into graduate work, but thereafter two courses were scheduled each semester.

The faculty were selected from both the College of Education and the College of Liberal Arts. Several part-time faculty were selected for their field-based experiences as well as for their academic credentials. All had terminal degrees and professional expertise in their areas.

In order to track progress through each semester, both internal and external evaluations were undertaken. The program staff conducted internal course evaluations each semester. They also met with students in groups and individually. Some meetings were directed to evaluation issues while others served the multiple purposes of informing, advising, and evaluating. During the second year, the staff began to meet with peer partner teachers and students on a systematic basis to monitor their progress and to ascertain their mutual areas of interest.

Outside evaluations were conducted each year. The first evaluation considered student concerns and reactions to courses and activities. At the end of each academic year, an evaluation was conducted using several data sources (students, university personnel, school administrators, community advisory committee members, and program staff). Questionnaires and interviews provided information for use in recognizing change in the roles, attitudes, skills, and approaches taken by participants as well as the need for further program improvements.

STUDENT POPULATION

The cohort in the program consisted of 20 teachers who are currently working in the school systems. These individuals, after completing the three-year, tuition paid program, received their Master's degrees in May 1991. Virtually all participants have strong backgrounds in teaching; the range of experience is 1 to 23 years with a median of 6.5 years and a mean of 8.6 years. In the rather bimodal distribution, eight teachers had taught 3 to 4 years, and six had taught 14 years or more.

Criteria for admission included a favorable recommendation by an immediate supervisor of the the local bilingual education program and meeting the standard university entrance requirements for graduate students. In addition, students needed a favorable evaluation from an interview with a College of Education Admissions Committee.

OUTCOMES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Outcomes of the program were envisioned during the design stage and were translated into the program objectives listed in Table 2. The objectives can be read as somewhat traditional- creating a degree program and creating staff development activities. However, the more important subtleties were in the change process presumed by the strategies envisioned as a response to a critical community need. Sarason (1971) warned that change implementation must be flexible, not presumed to be the purview of a single change-agent, and that commitment to historical axioms must be challenged in order to explore creative alternatives. This Master's degree program resulted in changes at all levels. (University, students, and schools). Some changes were planned, others unplanned, but all provided lessons for continued efforts.

CHANGES AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

The university encountered a new student population. The students were recruited and admitted in nontraditional ways. Grant funding to students requires changes from traditional administrative practice that created frustration for program staff and students. Because of the structure of summer and intersession courses, the staff had to work out the same adjustments with other administrative units.

CHANGES AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

At the College level, the program required a new curriculum and a new complement of faculty. Efforts to integrate faculty with the program were necessary. Furthermore, the need to mesh theory with practice for students who considered themselves sophisticated practitioners was a challenge to several faculty more familiar with undergraduate or preservice students. Finally, faculty were confronted with the same group of 20 students for each course, an exclusive group with strong dynamics and allegiances. Above all, the ESL program has been institutionalized and is now an option within the Curriculum and Instruction Option Master's degree here at the university.

STUDENT CHANGE

Important changes took place among the students. Few had experiences as graduate students. Most had been riffed or threatened with riffing repeatedly, and several brought with them the understandable negative attitude towards a public bureaucracy that asked students for a three-year commitment. Questionnaire and interview data described below suggested that attitude changes among students were slow, but marked, during the course of the three years. The students' attitudes were an important evaluation concern because of the necessity of developing a strong professional self-concept if educational leaders were to emerge.

First year evaluation data from both school district and college sources recognized the strengths and areas of need of the student group. For example, one respondent, Dr. M.V. Biggy, then the Dean of the College of Education, reported that participating students were busy, enthusiastic, and manifested signs of being overworked, a situation she regarded as far more positive than reports of being underworked. In light of their comments, the Dean assessed the students as people who had been away from university life for some time and were temporarily overwhelmed, trying to do graduate work on a part-time basis in addition to teaching all day and dealing with family obligations in the evening. From a collaborating school district, the director of a bilingual program indicated that the project was a "valuable experience even though many participants are experienced in teaching ESL"; she added that the participants were more aware of how to approach the students in terms of techniques and special topics like whole language instruction and language across the curriculum. In spite of positive external assessments, about half of the students themselves questioned the value of courses and the experience of the faculty. Several reminded the evaluator of their professional competence or years of experience and yet expressed reluctance to be involved in clinical experiences.

Deliberate reaching out by the clinical supervisor and advising sessions with the director were instrumental in supporting students until they felt more secure in the program and in their own growth. By the end of the second year, not one interviewee raised a concern that the coursework load was too heavy. Comments on questionnaires reversed the negative posture of earlier evaluation data in which the intellectual level of the program was questioned. For example, six teachers cited the great amount of work they had done as clear evidence of an intellectually stimulating environment.

A second indication of the development of a more positive professional attitude was the pride expressed in the projects that involved parents. Eight students cited course activities that developed their skills in involving parents, professionals, or both, in school activities. Several visited homes regularly and organized exhibitions or festivals highlighting a particular culture. They were able to see communication develop within and beyond the school.

In spite of initial students' apprehension about a clinical model, the effect of the program began to show in the way students behaved in their own elementary and secondary school positions. As practicing teachers, they began to fight for their multilingual students. They became advocates. In some cases, independently, but in most cases because of second year course assignments, students began to work with administrators to

improve multicultural opportunities. Consistent with the results reported by Minaya-Rowe (1990), eight of the 20 students took leadership roles in the profession by conducting presentations at state and local conferences. And, perhaps of most importance, they made changes in their classroom practice. They have become more assertive and systematic in their appreciation of the principles of second language acquisition. Their experiences have been validated through the courses, allowing them to become more effective teachers.

The movement from contact with the clinical supervisor and faculty to contact with peer-partner teachers allowed the students to practice collegiality and networking skills during the third year. In effect, they moved in stages from the status of a student being supervised to sharing their ESL skills on an equal basis with other professionals.

More slowly, students began to be conscious of changes in themselves. During the second spring term, two staff members began to see more collegial interaction with faculty. Year-end evaluation data from the students documented expressions of greater self-confidence and more positive attitudes about the program or possibilities for change in their schools. Eight students judged their meeting presentations and parent-school activities as " educational leadership" although three responded in the fashion, "Well, I didn't think about it that way at the time, but I suppose it was because . . . ." They recalled the lack of such activities prior to their effort, the enthusiasm among their pupils, the admiration expressed by colleagues, and the growth in participation of language minority parents.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR FUTURE EFFORTS

At the university level, we learned that working in close relationship with the schools was essential to meeting the needs of language minority pupils and their ESL teachers. The university has greater awareness of the needs of the schools, and the schools have greater openness to faculty and staff. The working relationship has been widened in scope because of the school-college collaborative.

The College of Education was able to build its capacity to prepare teachers for language minority students. We learned to network with local, state, and national agencies, to collaborate with different university units, to integrate services within and outside the College, and to establish links among individuals who are interested in issues related to this new, emerging population. As a consequence of this project, the College now offers an institutionalized bilingual/ESL graduate program for teachers across the Commonwealth.

To support the professional development effort we are now aware of the advantages of including nonteaching school personnel and recognizing their needs. It was necessary to reassess the educational services and mode of delivery. In order to have an impact, the College had to be responsive to the instructional, institutional, and societal levels identified by Goodlad and Richter (1966) as necessary to lasting change.

Working with experienced teachers who have been thrust into a discipline new to them presented the staff with more advising needs than they had anticipated. They learned that a strong, affective/attitudinal component is necessary if the transition to graduate work is to be smooth. The students felt inordinate demands on their time from work, university courses, and family obligations in addition to stress from facing the risk of riffing on a yearly basis. The more experienced teachers had developed methods of their own, perhaps by trial and error, and theoretically-based coursework often raised insecurities or prompted impatience. While the students were capable of, and did, strong academic work, they needed support to a degree greater than many other graduate students. Future efforts will build in more personnel, time, and resources for student contact. To the credit of the staff who felt overextended during many days and weeks, the initial entrants in the program remained throughout the three years. (Only one person left early in the program, and that was for health reasons.) The students, grounded in early courses with a knowledge base relevant to their ESL teaching, grappled enthusiastically with practice-related clinical courses.

SUMMARY

The need for well-prepared ESL teachers has been clear, but rapidly changing demographics and unrelenting economic problems for schools have made response difficult. Grandfathering policies that allow teachers certified in other areas to teach ESL classes partially solved the teacher shortage problems on paper, but they created another need for shoring up the knowledge and skills of teachers new to the ESL field. The response of one university and six communities to professional development needs was to create a Master's degree program supported by work with administrators and parents.

Implementing the program resulted in changes in the university, schools, and the students themselves. The university administration and faculty developed new relationships, implemented a curriculum geared to intensive clinical activity, and learned to work with students in need of extensive advising and support.

The success of the clinical model depended on two major components. After a year of application and theory coursework, the students were engaged in extensive contact with a university-based clinical supervisor. They moved through their classmate and supervisor observations before moving into relationships with school-based peer-partner teachers and greater work with administrative personnel.

Change in students was supported by many school personnel who had been, themselves, touched by the Superintendents' Forum and Principals' Seminar as well as by networking efforts. Teachers, given validation and direction through courses and the clinical model, developed leadership skills. They attained a new sense of themselves as initiators of greater contact with language minority parents who supported their efforts and as advocates for their language minority students.

The funding of the program by the U.S. Department of Education clearly provided a focus for the larger university on the importance of the program to the College of Education and the community. It has enabled expression of the university's willingness to meet local educational needs of the teachers and administrators in the northeast region of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The overall effect of the project has been positive on the participants, the College, the University, and the community.

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